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Grid failure: Power disruption hits Jatiya Sangsad, court, ZIA

'Industries incurring, huge loss'

By Staff Correspondent

The national grid failed again yesterday disrupting power supply in most parts of the country including the city.

Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions were without power for about 20 minutes as the grid failed at 10:58 am due to tripping of a circuit in the 230-KV Ashuganj-Ghorasal grid line.

Although PDB men started restoring power supply in dis-

tricts under the four divisions

in the afternoon, there were frequent disruptions and load shedding in those areas due to inadequate supply.

In the city, power supply was disrupted also in high priority areas like the Jatiya Sangsad, Zia International Airport and Secretariat.

As the mercury rose to 34.4 degree Celsius in the capital, the absence of power for two to

three hours in most parts of the city followed by frequent disruptions throughout the day increased miseries of the city dwellers.

Some parts of the capital and its adjacent areas remained without power till 9:30 last night.

Water supply was also affected in different areas of the city. Many residents reported that their electrical and electronic goods were damaged by the frequent disruptions in power supply.

Normal activities at offices, business houses, shopping centres, educational institutions and in the court area were seriously affected due to sultry heat and frequent power failure.

At the Jatiya Sangsad, power supply was disrupted twice yesterday. Some 15 persons remained stuck inside a lift for few minutes due to power failure.

There was no power supply at Zia International Airport from 11 am to 1:30 pm and from 4 pm to 4:25 pm. Emergency power supply was provided through a generator. But the air-conditioning system did not operate, leaving the passengers and officials inside suffering on a hot and humid day.

One out of the two circuits of the 230-KV line tripped due to 'technical problem'. Subsequently, the other circuit also tripped due to excessive load. This stopped power transmission between Ghorasal and Ashuganj, the two major power stations in the country, PDB officials said.

As a result, operation of most of the power generation units including those at Haripur, Siddhiganj in the eastern region and other units in the western region were stopped.

PDB sources said power supply was restored first at Bangabhaban and its surrounding areas at around 11:18 am through the alternative

See page 12 col 3



A shopkeeper at city's New Market tries to cool off using a hand fan during power disruption yesterday. --Star Photo

See page 12 col 3

Akhteruzzaman cites 7 reasons in his reply to showcause

By Staff Correspondent

Dissident BNP lawmaker Akhteruzzaman in his reply yesterday to the show-cause notice urged the party yesterday to withdraw the suspension order against him.

In his letter to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Akhter defended his joining the parliament proceedings. A copy of the reply was also sent to the party Secretary-General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Pleading his "total innocence", Akhter said his expulsion would neither do justice to him, nor it would serve the interest of the party. "I, therefore, request you not to expel me from the party and withdraw the suspension order imposed on me," said the letter.

Akhter wrote a letter to the party chief suggesting that BNP return to parliament breaking the

long boycott. He made copies of the letter available to press.

In his reply to the show-cause notice, the lawmaker cited seven reasons for which he should not be expelled from the party for what it termed his anti-organisational activities. Earlier on September 5, the party at a Standing Committee meeting

suspended his primary membership for making statement against the party position on the issue of joining parliament.

He was asked to come up with his reply to party secretary-general within three days on receipt of the final notice.

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See page 11 col 4

Gulshan garments fire: No action against owners yet

By Staff Correspondent

No action has been taken against the authorities of the garment factory in the city in which 12 people were killed in a fire incident on the night on August 27.

The tragic incident took place as there was no fire safety arrangement at the factory, located at Banani.

Asked why no action has yet been taken in this regard, officials of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department and police shifted the responsibility to each other.

Fire Service officials said they did not file any case as investigation was going on. They avoided a direct reply when asked whether there was any progress in the investigation and how long it would take.

But it took no action against any defaulting garment factory owner although at least 100 people were killed in fire and fire related incidents in garment factories in the city since 1990, the sources said.

Meanwhile, sources in the home ministry said a draft Bill seeking amendments to the Fire Service and Civil Defence Ordinance of 1951 is lying with the ministry. The ministry took about three years to finalise the

Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) earlier that most of the garment factories in the city were violating fire safety laws of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Ordinance of 1951.

Explaining, an official of the department said so long as they preferred motivating authorities of garment factories to improve safety conditions. This worked well till the recent incident, he said.

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See page 11 col 7

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See page 11 col 7

Govt under fire for agreeing to SAARC cumulation system

By Staff Correspondent

(GSP) against the exported goods to the European countries.

They also urged the government to re-consider the issue before making SAARC cumulation system effective from October 1 this year for the sake of development of backward linkage industries in the country.

They said the government should have consulted the garment manufacturers and people involved with backward linkage industries before giving consent to the system for availing generalised system of preference

auditorium. Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, Prof. Mostafizur Rahman of Dhaka University, Zillu Hay Razli of the European Commission, Dhaka office, Mohammad Nuruddin, Chairman, BOMMEA standing committee on labour arbitration, Dr. Salma Zahir, and labour leaders Shariful Islam, Abul Hossain, Joynal Abdin, Zaeed Iqbal Khan and Delwar Hossain participated in the

discussion.

Dr. Debapriya said the country's textile sector is going to face a number of challenges in the near future, yet there is no comprehensive study or strategic guideline.

The major challenges facing the country, according to him, are withdrawal of quota regime in the year 2005, impact of a recent bill passed by the US Congress allowing duty- and quota-free access of goods from

sub-Saharan and African states, threat of cancellation of GSP facilities by the US government and SAARC regional cumulation for exporting goods to the European markets.

He also said that the actual response should come from the entrepreneurs since they are main victims of the policy changes.

Prof. Mostafiz said the issue of regional cumulation needs much more than it has re-

ceived. It is not clear why the government suddenly agreed on the provision despite declining earlier.

He observed that the garment exporters will have to bring down prices of their products to survive in a quota-free market. Referring to the EU rule regarding regional cumulation, he said to avail the GSP facilities local entrepreneurs would have to add more value.

See page 11 col 4

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Fireworks during the opening ceremony for the Sydney 2000 Olympic football preliminaries in Melbourne yesterday. The Millennium Games will be held in Sydney from September 15 to October 1 with football preliminaries being held throughout Australia.

- AFP photo

Olympic soccer kicks off Doom & gloom two days ahead of opening

SYDNEY, Sept 13: The Sydney Olympics began today, but not the way Australia wanted it to, reports AFP.

While bumper crowds filled the football stadiums, an expectant host nation clamouring for a record haul of Olympic medals came away empty-handed and then there was the drug scandals.

Taiwanese weightlifter Chen Po-pu became the first athlete to be sent home from Sydney after testing positive to steroids.

News of his expulsion was followed by confirmation that Bulgarian long and triple jumper Iva Prandzheva, a two-

A new TVRO has been installed at Bangladesh Television (BTV) for direct transmission of Sydney Olympic through satellite. Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria formally inaugurated the facility at a function at the BTV auditorium here yesterday afternoon, reports BSS.

time world outdoor champion-ship medalist, had failed a second test for anabolic steroids.

Later today Kazakh swimmer Yevgenia Yermakova was barred from the Games for testing positive to furosemide, a diuretic.

Throw into the equation Olympic bus drivers walking off the job, noxious fumes over-coming 40 people at Sydney's international airport and Aborigines threatening protests, the alarm bells started ringing.

But there was positive news.

US women's athletics coach Karen Dennis said Marion Jones would take home an unprecedented five gold medals. Pat Rafter wanted to patch things up with Mark Philippoussis and Damir Dokic, the Mad Dad of tennis, will have to pay to watch his daughter play.

See page 11 col 7



Khaleda leaving for KSA yesterday
- Star photo

Khaleda in Jeddah

By Staff Correspondent
BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia reached Jeddah yesterday afternoon.

She is on a 10-day visit to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Saudi King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz. She will perform Umrah during the visit.

Khaleda was given a hearty reception on her arrival at Jeddah airport at 3:30 pm local time said a party press release.

High officials from Royal Saudi Protocol office, Bangladeshi Embassy officials in KSA and a large number of expatriate Bangladeshi as well as local BNP leaders and workers welcomed her at the airport.

Later, Khaleda Zia was taken to Jeddah Conference Palace. She was due to leave for Makka to perform Umrah yesterday. Besides, she is also expected to have a medical check up at the King Faisal Hospital.

Earlier, the BNP Chairperson left Dhaka on board a Saudi Airlines aircraft at noon. A large number of leaders and activists of BNP and its different front organisations saw her off at the Zia International Airport.

GSP facilities

Clinton for favourable treatment

WASHINGTON, Sept 13: Bangladesh is expecting a favourable treatment from the United States on the question of Generalised System of Preference (GSP) in textiles, reports BSS.

President Clinton has instructed his administration to look sympathetically into the matter of GSP facilities to Bangladesh in view of the demand made by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

This was conveyed by Bruce Riedel, Special Assistant to President Clinton to State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury at a meeting on Monday at the White House. Ambassador K M Shiehazuddin was present.

Prime Minister during her recent visit to New York to attend the UN Millennium Summit requested President Clinton not to withdraw GSP facilities to

See page 11 col 6



Adel being taken to jail after the CMM's Court rejected his bail prayer yesterday.
- Star photo